

Approved – August 24, 2023

**THE BY-LAWS  
OF THE  
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY STAFF SENATE**

**ARTICLE I**  
**Name**

Section 1.1 Name. The name of this public body shall be Western Carolina University Staff Senate (*Staff Senate*).

**ARTICLE II**  
**Agency**

Section 2.1 Governing Documents. These By-Laws of the Western Carolina University Staff Senate (*Bylaws*) along with any appendix (*Appendix*) formally approved by the Staff Senate shall constitute the governing documents for the Staff Senate.

**ARTICLE III**  
**Purpose of the Staff Senate**

Section 3.1 Purpose. The Staff Senate is organized and shall at all times be operated exclusively for the purpose of representing the interests and concerns of all employees subject to the State of North Carolina Human Resources Act (*SHRA*) and non-faculty employees who are exempt from the State of North Carolina Human Resources Act (*EHRA*). The Staff Senate shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor and appropriate decision-making bodies as it deems appropriate.

Section 3.2 Vision. The Staff Senate seeks to improve the quality of life at Western Carolina University (*University* or *WCU*) for its students and all employees through mutual understanding; recognition of staff contributions; support for professional development and technical training; and respect for the worth of the individual.

**ARTICLE IV**  
**Delegates**

Section 4.1 General Powers. The control and management of the affairs of the Staff Senate shall be vested in its Delegates (*Delegates*) which may include taking action; receiving information; and/or providing advice per these Bylaws and/or as requested.

Section 4.2 Number, Election, Tenure, and Limitation on Serving.

(a) The number of Delegates constituting the Staff Senate shall be thirty (30) voting members, one (1) Chair, and three (3) non-voting, ex officio members. Representation shall be based on proportional representation on the following federal job classification codes:

Executive/Administrative; Professional; Technical; Clerical/Secretarial; Craftsmen; and Maintenance/Service. UNC Staff Assembly representatives shall be voting members of Staff Senate, with full voting privileges, until the expiration of their UNC Staff Assembly term. In addition, the following individuals or their designees shall be considered ex-officio members of Staff Senate without vote: (i) the Chancellor of the University (***Chancellor***), (ii) the Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources and Payroll (***VC-HR***), and (iii) the immediate Past Chair of the Staff Senate (***Past Chair***).

(b) A Delegate must be an SHRA or EHRA non-faculty employee who is (1) a permanent part-time employee or full-time employee and (2) has completed probationary requirements as specified by the State of North Carolina and/or the UNC Code and Policy Manual.

(c) A Delegate shall (1) participate in meetings of the Staff Senate, including standing committee meetings, unless exempt pursuant to these Bylaws; (2) serve on no fewer than one standing committee of the Staff Senate; and (3) attend, as directed by the Chair of the Staff Senate, university committees and community meetings.

(d) A Delegate shall be elected to a term of three (3) years and shall assume their elected position on July 1, after the election.

(e) A Delegate may be elected to two (2) consecutive terms. A partial or unexpired term of less than one (1) year shall not be considered one term for the purpose of the Delegate's two term limit. A partial or unexpired term of one (1) year or more shall be considered one term for the purpose of the Delegate's two term limit.

(f) Approved Staff Senate activities shall be considered part of the regular workday of each elected Delegate.

(g) A Delegate who experiences a change in federal job classification shall be permitted to serve the remainder of the term.

Section 4.3 Meetings. All meetings of the Staff Senate shall be considered public meetings, pursuant to the North Carolina Open Meetings law and shall be open to all employees and students, and the public to observe and make comments as permitted. Regular meetings of the Staff Senate shall be held at least once monthly pursuant to these Bylaws.

Section 4.4 Special Meetings. The Staff Senate must provide the day, hour, and place for the holding of special meetings of the Staff Senate at least two (2) days in advance. A Special Meeting may be held with less than two (2) days-notice, upon consultation with the University's chief legal officer or delegate. Special meetings of the Staff Senate may be called by or at the request of the Chair, or any five (5) Delegates who provide a written demand for a special meeting to the Chair. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Staff Senate may fix the day, hour, and any place as the time and place for holding any special meeting pursuant to these Bylaws.

Section 4.5 Location of Meetings. Meetings of the Staff Senate may be held at a location selected by the Chair and on the property of, or managed by, Western Carolina University. Delegates may participate in a regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate by, or conduct the

meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all Delegates participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A Delegate participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

Section 4.6 Notice of Meetings. As provided in these Bylaws, meetings of the Staff Senate must be held with notice including the date of, time of, location of, and, if applicable, how to remotely access the meeting.

Section 4.7 Content of Meetings. Generally, meeting agenda shall be set by the Executive Committee pursuant to these Bylaws. Items may be added to the agenda at a meeting if approved by the Delegates present. Order of business may be altered by general consensus of the Delegates during the meeting.

Section 4.8 Quorum. A majority of the number of Delegates entitled to vote, as fixed by these Bylaws, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Staff Senate.

Section 4.9 Voting. Each Delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The act of the majority of the Delegates present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Staff Senate. Delegates will only hold the right to one vote regardless of position(s) held unless serving as a proxy for another delegate.

Section 4.10 Proxies. A Delegate may give proxy to another Delegate. The Delegate who has a proxy for another Delegate, must verbally announce the proxy prior to any action taken on behalf of the proxy. A proxy shall be considered present with regard to the establishment of a quorum, including for the purposes of Section 4.14, Section 4.15, and Section 5.4 of these Bylaws.

Section 4.11 Electronic Attendance. For any regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate, a Delegate may participate and vote, subject to the limitations provided in this Section, by means of a conference telephone or other electronic communication device that permits all persons participating at the meeting to simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. Any Delegate participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting. If a Delegate elects to participate in a meeting via electronic communication as provided in this Section for convenience or other personal reasons, such participation shall be limited to no more than four (4) meetings per fiscal year unless otherwise required by inclement weather or other exigent circumstances. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Chair in his/her discretion may conduct a meeting of the Directors by use of telephone conference or other electronic means for good cause, such as inclement weather or other exigent circumstances.

Section 4.12 Power to Elect and Appoint Officers. The Delegates of the Staff Senate shall have the power to elect officers and agents as the Staff Senate may deem necessary for transaction of the business of the Staff Senate.

Section 4.13 Resignation. A Delegate may resign at any time by giving notice of resignation in writing addressed to the Chair of the Staff Senate, or by presenting a written resignation in person at a regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate.

Section 4.14 Removal. An elected Delegate may be removed from office at any time with

or without cause by the Delegates only if the number of votes cast to remove such Delegate are in excess of 2/3 of the Delegates present. The Staff Senate Governance Committee shall promulgate a procedure to effectuate the removal pursuant to this Section. Removal may occur only at a meeting called for the purpose of removing the Delegate and the meeting notice shall state that the purpose, or one of the purposes, of the meeting is removal of the Delegate. Removal from the Staff Senate shall not be considered a grievable event pursuant to the UNC Code and Policy Manual or WCU policy.

Section 4.15 Failure to Attend Meetings. Notwithstanding Section 4.14, an elected Delegate's failure to attend four (4) Staff Senate meetings in any twelve (12) consecutive month period or failure to attend four (4) standing committee meetings in any twelve (12) consecutive month period to which they are assigned may result in removal of such Delegate from the Board upon the approval of a majority of the remaining Delegates at any regular meeting or special meeting of the Staff Senate. The Staff Senate Governance Committee shall promulgate a procedure to effectuate the removal pursuant to this Section. Removal from the Staff Senate shall not be considered a grievable event pursuant to the UNC Code and Policy Manual or WCU policy.

Section 4.16 Vacancies. Vacancies occurring on the Staff Senate shall be filled by the person with the next highest votes within the same federal job classification code at the time of the election. When a vacancy occurs and all alternates within the applicable federal job classification have been exhausted, the Executive Committee shall appoint a replacement from another classification to serve until the end of the current fiscal year, at which time the vacancy shall be filled through the standard election process.

Section 4.17 Leave of Absence. If a Delegate must temporarily vacate their seat due to part-time employment (e.g. nine month position); health reasons; or tragic event, their seat on Staff Senate may be temporarily filled by an alternate Delegate from the same federal job classification. If there are no alternate Delegates available from the same federal job classification, the Executive Committee may appoint an alternate Delegate to the seat until the Delegate returns to the Staff Senate.

(a) A seat shall be considered temporarily vacated if the absence is for six (6) months or less.

(b) A seat shall be considered permanently vacated if the absence is for more than six (6) months. If the seat is permanently vacated, relevant sections of these Bylaws shall control.

Section 4.18 Termination. If a Delegate is terminated and/or otherwise separated from university employment, the Delegate's seat shall be considered vacant pursuant to these Bylaws.

Section 4.19 Parliamentary Authority. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Staff Senate and its committees in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any special rules of order the Staff Senate may adopt.

**ARTICLE V**  
**Officers**

Section 5.1 Officers of the Staff Senate. The officers of the Staff Senate shall be a chair (*Chair*), a chair-elect (*Chair-Elect*), a secretary (*Secretary*), a treasurer (*Treasurer*); a parliamentarian (*Parliamentarian*), a past chair (*Past Chair*), and a technologist (*Technologist*), who shall be elected by the Staff Senate from among their number and who shall hold office by virtue of their appointments as officers of the Staff Senate.

Section 5.2 Election and Term of Office. The Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Technologist, and all other officers of the Staff Senate elected or appointed by the Staff Senate shall be elected for a one (1) year term. The officers of the Staff Senate shall hold their office so long as they are employed by the University. An officer shall not hold more than one office at a time, and no officer shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. If a Delegate assumes an unexpired officer term for less than six (6) months, the Delegate shall remain eligible to serve two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 5.3 Resignation. Any elected or appointed officer of the Staff Senate may resign at any time by providing written notification of such resignation to the Chair, and such resignation shall become effective immediately upon receipt of such notification or at such later date as may be specified in the notification.

Section 5.4 Removal. If it is deemed an officer is not fulfilling duties as described in these Bylaws, a 2/3 vote of the Staff Senate Delegates present at a meeting is needed in order to remove the officer from the seat. Any Delegate with cause to initiate removal should discuss the situation with the Parliamentarian who will bring it to the entire Staff Senate body (and notify the person in question) at the next scheduled meeting where a discussion with entire Staff Senate body will take place. A vote for removal will take place at the following scheduled meeting. In event that the officer in question is the Parliamentarian, or there is no Parliamentarian, then the officer to initiate the discussion will be the Secretary.

Section 5.5 Vacancies. Vacancies among elected or appointed officers of the Staff Senate occurring during the terms thereof shall be filled by the Staff Senate at any meeting of the Staff Senate. Any officer appointed to fill a vacancy occasioned by the removal, resignation or death of an officer shall hold office until his/her successor shall have been duly qualified and appointed, or until his/her earlier death, resignation, retirement, removal, or disqualification.

Section 5.6 Chair. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Staff Senate and has the authority to preside over all meetings of any standing or special committee of the Staff Senate. The Chair shall have such other powers including: Serve as liaison to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees; serve as liaison to any other university level administrative entity; serve as a representative to the UNC Staff Assembly; shall call any special meeting pursuant to these Bylaws; and any other power to advance the business of the Staff Senate. To maintain the impartiality of the Chair position, the Chair may only vote to break a tie. Should the Chair wish to vote on a matter outside of these restrictions, the Chair may request the Chair Elect serve as the Chair for the duration of the discussion and vote regarding the matter, during which the Chair Elect, serving as Chair, may not vote except to break a tie.

Section 5.7 Vacancy of Chair. In the event that the Chair is unable to complete the elected term of office, for any reason, the Chair-Elect shall assume the vacant office of the Chair for the length of the unexpired term.

Section 5.8 Chair-Elect. The Chair-Elect shall preside at all meetings of the Staff Senate in the absence of the Chair or when requested by the Chair. The Chair-Elect shall assist the Chair in performing duties; attend meetings at the request of the Chair; and develop and carry out procedures for making all appointments to standing committees. The Chair-Elect will serve as a delegate for UNC Staff Assembly. When serving as Chair at request of the Chair or due to absence of Chair, the Chair-Elect shall follow the voting restrictions assigned to the Chair.

Section 5.9 Vacancy of Chair-Elect. In the event of a vacancy of the Chair-Elect, for any reason, a special election will be held at any regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate at the direction of the Chair in order to fill the vacant office of Chair-Elect

Section 5.10 Secretary. The Secretary shall take minutes and confirm attendance at each meeting of the Staff Senate. In addition, the Secretary shall distribute minutes to Delegates at least three (3) working days before the next scheduled meeting of the Staff Senate; shall serve as Secretary of the Executive Committee; shall be the custodian of all records; and shall assume the role of the Chair in the event that the Chair or Chair-elect are not present at a Staff Senate meeting.

Section 5.11 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall provide general financial oversight of the Staff Senate financial accounts and budget. In addition, the Treasurer shall provide bookkeeping, record keeping, and financial reporting for Staff Senate accounts.

Section 5.12 Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian shall maintain order at meetings; ensure that Robert's Rules of order are followed; determine quorum; count votes and confirm vote outcomes; serve on the Governance Committee; and shall review, on an annual basis, these Bylaws.

Section 5.13 Technologist. The Technologist shall serve on the WCU IT Council; act as the liaison between Staff Senate and the WCU Division of Information Technology; facilitate virtual meetings as requested; manage, organize, and update the Staff Senate web and/or internet presence; manage digital documentation, including any digital conversion of Staff Senate physical documentation; and assist Executive Committee members with technology needs, including, but not limited to, storage shares and access to distribution groups, e-mail, wireless accounts, etc.

Section 5.14 Vacancy of any other elected Officer. In the event any other Officer position becomes vacant, for any reason, a special election shall be held at any regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate at the direction of the Chair in order to fill the vacant office for the remainder of the term.

Section 5.15 Past Chair. The Past Chair shall serve as an ex-officio member without vote of the Staff Senate. If the Past Chair is at the end of their term, they may serve one additional year as Past Chair with all powers and duties of the office as defined by these Bylaws. The Past Chair must sit out one full year at the end of the term as Past Chair prior to being re-

elected to the Staff Senate, unless the Past Chair is nominated to complete an incomplete elected term.

## ARTICLE VI Committees

Section 6.1 Purpose and Designation of Committees. The Staff Senate may maintain standing committees to serve in an advisory capacity to the Staff Senate regarding those aspects of the affairs of the Staff Senate to which they have been delegated responsibility. The Staff Senate may designate from time to time one (1) or more special committees, in addition to those standing committees required by these Bylaws, as deemed necessary to properly carry out the activities of the Staff Senate. The creation of a special committee must be approved by a majority of the Delegates present. Such committees shall perform such duties as the Staff Senate may direct, in a manner consistent with these Bylaws.

Section 6.2 Appointment of Committee Members. The Chair, after consultation with the Chair-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Technologist shall have the power to appoint the members and the chairs of all regular and/or special committees, who must be Delegates.

Section 6.3 Notice of Committee Meetings. As provided in these Bylaws, regular meetings of any regular or special committees must be held with notice. The person or persons calling a special meeting of a committee shall, at least two (2) days before the meeting, give written notice thereof delivered personally or sent by United States mail or electronic mail to each committee member at his/her address(es) of record. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail in a sealed envelope so addressed with postage thereon prepaid. If sent by electronic mail, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when sent. Such notice need not specify the purpose for which the meeting is called.

Section 6.4 Minutes. All committees shall keep regular minutes of their proceedings and report the same to the Staff Senate at the next succeeding regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate.

### Section 6.5 Quorum and Attendance via Electronic Communication.

(a) A majority of the number of members of a committee entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any committee meeting. However, when one or more vacancies occur on a committee, a majority of the existing committee members shall constitute a quorum.

(b) Committee members may participate in a regular or special meeting of the committee by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of electronic communication by which all committee members participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A committee member participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

Section 6.6 Manner of Acting/Proxies Prohibited. The act of a majority of the members of a committee entitled to vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the committee. Committee members may not vote by proxy.

Section 6.7 Attendance. Delegates are required to attend their assigned standing committee meeting(s). A lack of attendance by a Delegate may result in the Delegate's removal from the standing committee pursuant to Section 6.8 of these Bylaws or removal from the Staff Senate pursuant to Sections 4.14 and/or 4.15 of these Bylaws.

Section 6.8 Resignation/Removal of Committee Members. Any committee member may resign by providing written notification of such resignation to the Chair of the committee, and such resignation shall become effective immediately upon receipt of such notification or at such later date as may be specified in the notification. Any committee member may be removed from a committee and placed on a different committee, with or without cause, by the Chair of the Staff Senate.

Section 6.9 Vacancies. Vacancies occurring on any committee may be filled by the Chair. Any committee member appointed to fill a vacancy occasioned by the removal, resignation or death of a committee member shall hold office until the expiration of said former member's term of office, or until his/her earlier resignation or death.

Section 6.10 Number and Tenure of Committee Members. Each committee shall be comprised of at least two (2) persons, who must be Delegates, appointed pursuant to these Bylaws. The members and chair of each committee shall take office on the day of their appointment and hold office until the conclusion of the term and their successors have been appointed, or until their earlier resignation, removal or death, or until the committee has been dissolved.

Section 6.11 Standing Committees:

(a) Executive Committee. The duties of the Executive Committee will be to meet monthly or as needed to set the agenda and outline the order of all business for all Staff Senate meetings; to maintain committee SOP's and edit for changes annually.

- i. Membership: The membership of the Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair; Chair-Elect; Secretary; Treasurer; Parliamentarian; Past Chair; and the chairs of the remaining standing committees.
- ii. Leadership: The Chair of the Executive Committee shall be the Chair of the Staff Senate.
- iii. Meetings: The Executive Committee shall determine the appropriate discussion and disbursement of all issues and concerns which come to the Staff Senate (i.e., referral to a standing committee; establishment of a special committee or task force to consider an issue; referral to an administrative unit for clarification; placement on the agenda of the Staff Senate, etc.).

(b) Governance Committee. The duties of the Governance Committee will be to handle all nominations, elections, and orientation procedures for representatives and officers; to accept, study and recommend changes to these Bylaws and procedures; to accept, study, review, and recommend changes to standing committee SOPs; to develop procedures where required; to provide staff names to university persons seeking staff representation on university committees;



to address other issues and activities related to governance; to maintain committee SOP's and edit for changes annually.

(c) Staff Engagement Committee. The duties of the Staff Engagement Committee will be to plan and coordinate the communication function such that staff can exchange ideas with representatives on issues and concerns; to appoint a Community Services Liaison; to serve as the public relations agent of the Staff Senate; to maintain committee SOP's and edit for changes annually. Methods of communication may include newsletters, press releases, and web page management. Additional responsibilities may include employee recognition activities, service projects, and other public relations issues.

(d) Human Resources Committee. The duties of the Human Resources Committee will be to address all staff concerns and proposals in the area of salary/benefits, job classification, privatization, staff development and training, diversity/multiculturalism issues, and other human resources issues and activities; to maintain committee SOP's and edit for changes annually.

(e) Scholarship and Professional Development Committee. The duties of the Scholarship and Professional Development Committee are to organize, lead, and establish new fundraising efforts for the Staff Senate Scholarship Fund. Manages both the WCU Staff Senate Scholarship and the WCU Staff Senate Professional Development funds application processes and support the Staff Senate in other efforts. To maintain the Scholarship Review and Professional Development Ad hoc Committees. To maintain committee SOP's and edit for changes annually.

## **ARTICLE VII** **Fiscal Year**

Section 7.1 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Staff Senate shall be fixed to coincide with the fiscal year of the University.

## **ARTICLE VIII** **Amendments to Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws**

Section 8.2 Amendments to Bylaws. The power to adopt, amend, restate or repeal these Bylaws shall be vested only in the Delegates. These Bylaws may only be amended, restated or repealed upon a two-thirds majority vote of the Delegates present at any meeting, provided the proposed alteration, amendment, or repeal has been presented in writing, and accepted, at a regular meeting of the Staff Senate.

## **ARTICLE IX** **Dissolution**

Section 9.1 Dissolution. The Staff Senate may be voluntarily dissolved if (1) approved by the Chancellor of the University and (2) an affirmative vote of a majority of Directors then in office at any regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate subject to the notice and quorum provisions set forth in these Bylaws.